

From: Aaron Freed
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft

I am a systems administrator and have been for 15 years. I have held an MCSE since 1999.

I have been working with Microsoft products since Dos 2.11, and since Windows 3.0. I have worked with all versions of Windows NT starting with version 3.50 and up through the current version of Windows XP.

I have spent many, many hours with Microsoft products, learning them, supporting them, trouble-shooting them.

I have been involved with Linux (RedHat) on a serious level since Version 7.1 (on a less serious level, since Version 6.2).

With Microsoft, when there is a problem, I find that the solution is about 70% trying to figure out what the right menu option or button is to select to elicit a dialog that allows me to change the desired settings. 20% of the time is spent trying to find away around Microsoft's attempts to prevent me from "doing something dangerous, that might harm my software". And 10% of the time, I am actually resolving the problem.

The key to troubleshooting Microsoft problems seems to be in rote memorization of menu-options, dialogs and buttons needed to change a desired setting.

The key, with Linux, is usually a matter of editing a script or possibly recoding some software or component, which generally requires not only an understanding of why the problem happened, but also how the "fix" for it works--or at least knowing that you have access to the source code and other documentation that will help you to understand how the fix works, why it works, and how the program being fixed works.

In short, it is something like the difference between knowing how to go to the store and purchase a loaf of cake, versus knowing how to actually make a cake from scratch (with documented and usually fairly clearly explained instructions).

Microsoft is a closed system, a "black box", if you will. You generally put in your data and you get a result, but you really don't know how that result is generated. And when that result is not what is expected or desired, your recourses for figuring out why are quite limited, because you aren't allowed inside the "black box".

Linux, on the other hand, is an open system. Like Microsoft, you put in your data and get a result out. However, if the result is not what is desired,

or expected, you have the option of taking apart the "black box" and tinkering with its internal workings to make it work the way you want it to.

Microsoft charges you for the privilege of using their software--their marketing effort focused primarily on emphasizing the claim that MS is easy to use and that "if you know one program, you pretty much know them all."

Linux makes no such claim. Nor are you ever charged for it. However, with a little know-how and a willingness to learn and try to understand, what you give up in a generic, standardized interface, you more than make up for in terms of control of your system and your data. And, surprisingly, it is not very difficult to customize your system to make it just as 'generically easy to use' as Windows. (Frequently even more so.)

Now, Microsoft wants to offer us the ".Net" option, where we completely surrender control of our system to them in the form of paying a monthly or yearly subscription fee to "rent" their software. Ostensibly, this alleviates the need for upgrades, maintenance, and troubleshooting on the part of the end-user. In truth, it removes the "ownership" of the user's data from him, because, should the user decide not to renew this "subscription" to Microsoft's ".Net", service, they will find that they can no longer access their data because it is stored in formats understood only by Microsoft.Net programs.

Not only are we being asked to surrender control of our computers to Microsoft, we are being asked to surrender control of our personal data. And, on top of that, we are being required to pay Microsoft a monthly fee for the privilege!

Slavery is one thing. Asking the slaves to pay for the privilege of being enthralled to a master who hardly has their best interests at heart is just plain stupid.

I choose not to be part of this.

I choose an operating system that does not require daily reboots just to keep running properly.

I choose not to spend hours of my time trying to navigate through installation routines that have been made Byzantine in their complexity--in order to protect Microsoft's software license.

I choose not to use an operating system and software applications that were designed with the assumption that I not only don't know what I am doing, but also that I am too stupid to learn.

I choose not to be required to call Microsoft and inform them of every significant change I make to my hardware.

I choose not to be an unwitting "beta test site" for products that have not been properly quality controlled because it was deemed more important to rush the product out the door in order to make a few extra sales.

I choose Linux.
I choose FREEDOM.

With Linux, when there is a problem, I find

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"The truth is out there... But I have no idea who left it there, nor why."